



# MCU Mental Health Matters

## How do I take care of myself when everyone needs me?

The term “self-care” has become a buzzword that often feels like its own burden. As birthworkers and caretakers our lives can become consumed by providing care to others while prioritizing who has the most pressing need. Sometimes taking care of ourselves gets lost in the shuffle. How can we pour from an empty cup and expect to be effective? How do we find the time to fill our cup when our time is spread thin? Making the choice to prioritize our own care can feel selfish at first. Over time, we come to realize that taking care of ourselves allows us to be a more engaged caregiver for others. Caring for ourselves begins with exploring what we need. Every individual has needs that are unique to them. We must first explore and discover our needs to ensure that they get met. Creating lofty goals for self-care can be counter-productive. Often, making sure our basic needs are met is the best place to start. Physical needs generally include food, hydration, movement, intimacy, touch, shelter. Emotional needs generally include quality time with loved ones, communication, intimacy, support. Spiritual needs generally include connection, gathering, personal beliefs and values, and expression of beliefs. Intellectual needs generally include curiosity, knowledge seeking, exploration. Social needs generally include building connection, intimacy, vulnerability, communication, openness, and establishing boundaries and limits. Without these basic human needs met, we may experience sadness, loneliness, irritability, frustration, or resentment. Some of your needs can be met by you while some needs require a connection with others. As someone inclined to care for others, it is very common to have difficulty asking those who care about us to meet our needs. There is vulnerability in the asking.

Take the time in the coming days and weeks to ponder your needs and how you will get them met. Take the risk of exploring your needs with others. Build connection by being vulnerable. Outline a simple and realistic plan that includes the most effective ways to get your physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and social needs met while providing care for others. You matter.

## Tips & Tasks

- Notice your limitations
- Communicate your needs
- Seek support
- Be vulnerable
- Be honest with yourself
- Be as kind to yourself as you are to others
- Notice your needs
- Build meaningful connections

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# Surviving Pandemic Fatigue



If you find yourself growing weary of masks, shields, tests, rules, restrictions, and debates over all of the above, you are not alone. It is hard to imagine that the longest global pandemic in history lasted for seven long years (Black Death 1346-1353). While we are unable to know with certainty how long our lives will need adaptation to this global pandemic, what we do know is that many of us want to go back to life as we've known it.

## FINDING A THERAPIST

- Search for a therapist who matches your value system and cultural experience
- Meet with a therapist up to a few times to see if they are a good fit
- Never stay with a therapist who makes comments that are harmful to you or make you uncomfortable
- Many people meet a few therapists before they find a good fit
- Seek referrals from people you trust

[Locate a Therapist](#)

Some indications that you may be experiencing pandemic fatigue include: a sense of isolation, overwhelmed by the added responsibilities associated with providing care, irritability, snapping at loved ones, feeling exhausted even with enough sleep, lack of motivation, lacking a sense of purpose, sadness, a decline in the commitment to use precautions to prevent spread of the virus, feeling anxiety about the need to interact with others, and feeling the profound impact of personal and collective loss and grief.

If not addressed, pandemic fatigue may lead to chronic anxiety, depression and burnout. How do you address pandemic fatigue when the pandemic is still impacting your life? Seek support. Connect with the people in your life who will listen. Find a therapist who is a good match for your needs. Talk about your experience and worries.

**For more suggestions for Overcoming "Pandemic Fatigue" please click to read this Huntsman Mental Health Institute article:**

Overcoming Pandemic Fatigue

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